

IOWA OUTDOORS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.state.ia.us/government/dnr/index.html

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IOWA, ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN AGENCIES AGREE TO DAILY PANFISH LIMITS ON MISSISSIPPI RIVER

DES MOINES – The Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin departments of natural resources will be adopting consistent panfish bag limits on the Mississippi River in an effort to reduce confusion among anglers from different states.

“We will have public meetings later this summer to discuss the panfish regulations and we will be accepting public comments on the issue,” said Marion Conover, chief of the Iowa DNR’s fisheries bureau. “I think this new regulation on the Mississippi River will be popular with our angling public. We have had a lot of calls for consistent bag limits for panfish on the river.”

The daily bag limits are 25 crappies, 25 rock bass, 25 bluegill or pumpkinseed sunfish, 25 striped, white, yellow or hybrid striped bass, and 25 yellow perch. The regulations are currently in place for Wisconsin residents and will be effective April 1 for residents of Illinois.

“Iowa anglers fishing on the Illinois or Wisconsin side of the river must comply with these panfish regulations,” Conover said.

If the regulations are approved in Iowa, they would be effective Jan. 1, 2004. Iowa already has a daily bag limit of 25 yellow perch for all inland waters, but does not have a bag limit for panfish.

“Sedimentation of important backwater habitat remains the biggest issue affecting panfish populations of the Mississippi River,” Conover said.

The three states, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are also working together to address the sediment issue.

For more information, contact Conover at 515-281-5208.

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ALBINO DEER CALLS JOHNSON COUNTY HOME

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

From a distance, you have to ask yourself; is it a dog? Maybe a lost calf? Up close, though, it is unmistakable. The white fur. The pink nose, eyes and ears. It's an albino deer, wandering around southern Johnson County.

"Several farmers in the area watched it (through the year) with its mother, a normal doe," passes along Bernie Mellecker. "I'm 76 and I'd never seen one before. It's something I'll probably never see again in my lifetime."

Wayne Grout found it hard to believe, too. But he has proof. "We saw it from a distance and I started walking up to get a picture. At about 15 yards, it finally got up and took off." The two men live in the general vicinity of the white deer.

That white and pink color scheme are the result of a recessive gene which causes a lack of pigmentation. Animals occasionally carry such a recessive gene without having it appear in offspring. When both parents possess the same gene, that trait; in this case albinism, occurs. In Nature, it is usually the kiss of death. "From a biological perspective, it is a genetic defect," explains the Department of Natural Resources' Guy Zenner. "Albino animals have no camouflage; no way to hide from predators. As a result, they don't survive long."

Well, not always. An albino deer was discovered in 1980, just northwest of St. Ansgar in Mitchell County. Zenner was the area's wildlife management biologist for the (then) Iowa Conservation Commission. Farmers there more or less adopted the deer. In fact, to protect her during hunting season, they convinced the Iowa Legislature to pass specific language against the taking of predominantly white, whitetail deer. The doe stayed in the area, producing one or two 'normal' fawns each spring. When she died in 1988, area residents chipped in for a full body taxidermy mount. Originally on display at Heartland Power Cooperative, it is now featured in a glass case, in a downtown St. Ansgar park.

Every few years, reports of a white deer surfaces. However, it might be a good time to re-read the hunting regulations. I asked several people, including a couple

hunters, and none thought it would be illegal to take an albino deer. However, the specific legislation protecting 'predominately white *whitetail* deer' remains on the books.

And, yes, the albino deer is still out there. Grout says two or three people in the area have seen it in the last month.

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IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of January 21, 2003

www.state.ia.us/fish

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report. Ice fishing reports will be released every week while quality ice conditions exist.

Northwest

Be cautious - there are still open water areas on the Iowa Great Lakes.

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): The fishing has picked up in the last week. Anglers are having success catching yellow perch at Buffalo Run, Mini-Wakan State Park and Anglers Bay. Anglers catching fish are using wigglers or wax worms on a teardrop or pilkee. Bluegills are biting at the Grade, and some are starting to be caught at Anglers Bay using a light teardrop and wigglers. There has been some walleye activity on the east side of Spirit, anglers presenting a minnow on a kastmaster or a jig and rap are having success.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): Walleye fishing is slow but some are being caught in Miller's Bay. Minnows seem to be a great bait to use. Crappies are also slow but some are being caught in Miller's Bay and Smith's Bay. Bluegill fishing is excellent, especially in Smith's Bay and in the north end. Teardrops with a wiggler or wax worm seems to be the preferred bait. Northern pike fishing is great. Pike are being caught through out the lake on chubs. Good locations are in Miller's Bay, Smith's Bay, and in the north end. Yellow perch are currently slow but are still being caught on teardrops with a wiggler or wax worm in Smith's Bay.

Brushy Creek (Webster): Walleye fishing is good after dark using jigging spoons tipped with minnows.

Badger Lake (Webster): Fishing is good for 8 to 9-inch crappie on live minnows and 7-1/2 to 8-1/2 inch bluegill on wax worms.

Moorehead Lake (Ida): Crappie fishing is good. Anglers are also catching some nice catfish on wax worms.

Crawford Creek Lake (Ida): Fishing is fair to poor for bluegill and crappie.

Yellow Smoke Lake (Crawford): Fishing is good for nice-sized bluegills. There are also a few crappies being caught.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing is fair. The best bite is after dark using minnows or jigging spoons.

Indian Lake, Eldred Sherwood Park (Hancock): Bluegill fishing is good using teardrop jigs tipped with a wax worm. Some sorting is required.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Southwest

Fishing overall has been slow in district. Not many anglers out primarily due to ice conditions. Still have some open water areas on several lakes. Ice conditions should improve this week with the cold weather, but overall – Caution is the word here.

Big Creek Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing is spotty in main portion of the lake, although some anglers have caught some nice fish using wax worms or minnows. Anglers report catching crappie and bluegill in the spillway area of the lake.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappie fishing is fair with most anglers using wax worms and minnows. Some largemouth bass have also been reported, although most are below the minimum length.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill fishing is slow to fair off the day-use area using wax worms and minnows. There was open water last week toward the middle of the lake that has recently frozen so ice conditions vary greatly across the lake.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Some bluegills have been caught, although generally fishing activity has been slow due to ice and weather conditions.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Crappie fishing has been slow using wax worms and minnows. Ice conditions are better in the northern part of the lake, and at last report there was still some open water in the southern part of the lake.

Easter Lake (Polk): Channel catfish fishing has been good using a variety of baits. Crappie fishing has improved with the cooler weather, although still spotty. Largemouth bass fishing remains slow although a few have been taken along the face of the dam.

Hickory Grove Lake (Story): Crappie fishing has been slow to fair, with some activity over the past week.

Viking (Montgomery): Anglers are picking up bluegill and crappie using a teardrop tipped with wax worm and minnows.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Anglers are catching bluegill near tin can dike using a teardrop tipped with a wax worm.

Three Mile (Union): Ice conditions are marginal. Ice varies from 3 to 8 inches, with some open water areas that the waterfowl are keeping open, so be careful. Fishing is good for bluegill on wax worms early morning and evening hours in flooded timber. Crappie and walleyes are being caught on minnows.

Twelve Mile (Union): Ice varies from 3 to 8 inches with some open water areas, so be careful. Fishing is good for bluegill, crappie, small yellow bass and walleye in early morning and evening hours in flooded timber or areas northeast of the west dock.

Fogle (Ringgold): Good for bluegill and channel catfish.

Green Valley (Union): Fair for crappie and bluegill in east arm.

Badger Creek (Madison): Fishing is generally slow, but the best activity is in morning and evening for bluegill and crappie.

West Lake Osceola (Clarke): Bluegill and crappie are fair. Fish the morning and evening hours for the best activity. Be careful of ice conditions, there maybe some open areas or recently iced over areas.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 – 19: There is 4 to 7 inches of ice on most backwater areas of the Mississippi on pools 16 – 19. Anglers are reporting good fishing for bluegills and slow to fair fishing for crappie in **Big Timber** on pool 17 and **Bell's Pocket** in pool 18. Boat ramp access on pools 16 – 19 is blocked by ice that has shut down walleye and sauger fishing in the tail-waters.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): Bluegills are biting near the fallen trees in Sand Run. Use a slow jigging motion with a teardrop tipped with a wax worm

Lake Geode (Henry): Good ice has just arrived late last week. Not a lot of anglers have been out yet.

Washington and Keokuk County Conservation Board Ponds: Don't forget these smaller bodies of water. Ice has been good on these for a while (6 to 8 inches). Bluegill fishing has been good using a wax worm on a green or chartreuse teardrop fished near the bottom. The fish are not real aggressive and are hitting lightly. Crappies are also hitting light, use minnows for the best chances to catch old paper mouth.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies have been biting on small tube jigs. Fishing has been the best in the Atwell's landing area and the bay near Honey Creek State Park. Ice thickness is averaging about 5 to 6 inches in the coves and back bays.

Lake Wapello (Davis): Bluegills and crappies have been biting on small jigs. Ice thickness is averaging about 6 inches.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Fishing has been slow with some bluegills and crappies biting on small jigs. Ice thickness is averaging 6 inches.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs tipped with wax worms or minnows. Ice thickness is varied between 4 to 5 inches, so use caution.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): Crappie fishing has been good to fair for 8-inch fish primarily in the morning using teardrops tipped with wax worms near brush piles.

Lake Iowa (Iowa): Crappie and bluegill fishing has been fair near deep brush piles.

Farm Ponds: Fishing has been fair in the morning and evening hours for bluegills.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River: Ice fishing conditions have been good and catches have been running better than typically seen in mid-winter ice fishing. Bluegill fishing has been very productive with a number fish up to 10 inches reported. In Pool 9, fishing around the **Minnesota Slough** near New Albin and **Lansing Big Lake** area near Lansing has been good. In Pool 10, the **spillway area, Joyce Lake** and **Mud Hen Lake** in the Harpers Ferry region and **Scoggins Lake** and **McGregor Lake** in the Marquette area

have been productive. **Bussey Lake** continues to support some quality bluegill fishing near Guttenberg. In Pool 11, good gill fishing has occurred in **Swift Slough** and the **Bertom/McCartney lakes**. In addition, strong incidental catches of crappie, warmouth, yellow bass and yellow perch are occurring. Typical rigs are simple – use a wax worm and a teardrop-type lure. Some good catches of northern pike have also been reported with tip-ups. The best fishing occurs in Pool 9 and 10. Use a live fathead or golden shiner fished along the edge of a weed line for 22 to 34-inch pike. Pool 12, **Fishtrap** is good for bluegill and crappie. Anglers are catching bluegills at **Kehough Slough**. In Pool 13, anglers are catching bluegills and a few crappies in **Brown's Lake**, **Scarborough** and **Michelsons**. In **South Sabula Lake**, anglers are catching crappie and bluegills and a few yellow perch. Anglers have had nice catches of crappie and bluegill at **Green Island**, **Saw Mill** and **Snag Slough**. Pool 14, some bluegills and crappies are being caught in **Cattail Slough**. Fishing is fair for bluegills and crappies at **Schrickers** and **Rock Creek**. Anglers fishing Pools 12 – 14 have been mainly using wax worms and artificial lures.

Alice Wyth Lake (Black Hawk): Bluegills are good on wax worms and spikes. Fish the bay around the boat ramp during evening hours for best success.

Casey Lake (Tama): Bluegill fishing is good with an occasional crappie taken on wax worms fished around structure.

For current information on trout fishing during the winter, call the **Manchester Trout Hatchery** at 563-927-5736, the **Big Spring Hatchery** at 563-245-1699 and the **Decorah Hatchery** at 563-382-3315.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-926-3276.

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